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INFO RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 4272
RHMFISS/TSA HQ WASHINGTON DC
RUEANHA/FAA NATIONAL HQ WASHINGTON DC
RHEFHLC/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC
RULSJGA/DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 000021

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/06/2020
TAGS: [EAIR](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [ECON](#) [LE](#)
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED ON NEW AIR PASSENGER SCREENING
RULES

REF: STATE 1187

Classified By: Ambassador Michele J. Sison for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) On January 7 the Ambassador delivered reftel points to Minister of Transportation and Public Works Ghazi al-Aridi and to Presidency Director General Naji Abi Assi. Aridi responded that while he opposed the decision to impose additional screening requirements on travelers from Lebanon, he understood the conditions that drove the decision. Aridi added that the issue of allowing Lebanese national airline Middle East Airlines to fly directly the U.S. was a more important question for Lebanon.

¶2. (C) Abi Assi emphasized to the Ambassador that the form of the new guidelines' announcement was more important than their content. The differentiation between state sponsors of terrorism and other countries of concern was not properly made, he complained, and the resulting sense of humiliation and embarrassment would only benefit extremists, especially in more traditional cultures. Abi Assi noted that Lebanese Ambassador to the U.S. Antoine Chedid had already voiced similar concerns about the method of announcing the new rules.

SISON